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DEPARTMENT OF STATE ARCHIVES

ROUTINE

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CFR REPORT, INFORM CONSULS, CINC/SHAPE FOR POLADS ONLY

E.O. 12065: GDS 10/24/85 (TARNOFF, PETER)

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9. (U) NEA - AMIN COMPLETES FIRST MONTH AS AFGHAN PRESIDENT (GDS 10/24/85)

(C) ALMOST EXACTLY ONE MONTH AFTER HIS ACCESSION TO TOP GOVERNMENTAL AND PARTY POSTS, AFGHAN PRESIDENT AMIN SUCCESSFULLY PUT DOWN THE FIRST SERIOUS MILITARY CHALLENGE TO HIS REGIME. LOYAL AIR FORCE AND ARMORED PERSONNEL USED TIGS AND TANKS TO CRUSH AN OCTOBER 14-15 REVOLT OF ANTI-AMIN FORCES AT THE RISHKHOR HEADQUARTERS OF THE SEVENTH INFANTRY DIVISION JUST OUTSIDE KABUL. THIS WAS THE FIFTH SERIOUS ARMY MUTINY SO FAR THIS YEAR.

(C) DURING HIS FIRST MONTH IN OFFICE, AMIN SOUGHT TO PROJECT A NEW IMAGE OF MODERATION AND LEGALITY FOR HIS REGIME AND TO DISTANCE HIMSELF FROM SOME OF THE REGIME'S PAST EXCESSES, BLAMING ABUSES ON THE "ONE-MAN RULE" OF HIS NOW-DECEASED PREDECESSOR, NOOR MOHAMMAD TARAKI. AMONG OTHER MEASURES, AMIN HAS APPOINTED A COMMISSION TO DRAFT A NEW CONSTITUTION, RENEWED AN AMNESTY OFFER TO REFUGEES IN PAKISTAN, AND ANNOUNCED THE RELEASE OF SEVERAL HUNDRED PRISONERS. HE HAS ALSO FOCUSED ON REFURBISHING HIS ISLAMIC CREDENTIALS. THERE ARE NO SIGNS SO FAR, HOWEVER, THAT SUCH EFFORTS ARE SUCCEEDING IN ATTRACTING WIDER SUPPORT FOR THE EMBATTLLED REGIME. AT THE SAME TIME AMIN'S SECRET POLICE HAVE CONDUCTED VIGOROUS PURGES OF THE OFFICER CORPS TO MINIMIZE THE POSSIBILITY OF CHALLENGES TO HIM FROM THAT QUARTER.

(C) FROM ALL AVAILABLE EVIDENCE, THE SOVIETS WERE SURPRISED BY AMIN'S TAKEOVER IN MID-SEPTEMBER BUT HAVE HAD LITTLE CHOICE IN THE SHORT TERM BUT TO CONTINUE TO SUPPORT AMIN AND THE DRA'S COUNTERINSURGENCY EFFORTS. POLITICALLY, THE SOVIETS APPEAR TO BE URGING, IF NOT INSISTING, THAT AMIN TAKE THE COURSE HE IS PURSUING IN EXCHANGE FOR INTENSIFICATION OF THEIR MILITARY SUPPORT. SOVIET ADVICE MAY INCLUDE IMPROVING RELATIONS WITH PAKISTAN AND THE U.S.

(C) AMIN HIMSELF HAS MADE IT CLEAR RHETORICALLY AND THROUGH SOME SMALL GESTURES THAT HE WOULD LIKE "BETTER AND FRIENDLIER" RELATIONS WITH THE U.S. WE ARE CAUTIOUSLY EXPLORING THE POSSIBILITIES FOR LESS CONTENTIOUS RELATIONS, RECOGNIZING THAT SERIOUS OBSTACLES CONFRONT US, INCLUDING OUR CONCERNS ABOUT THE DRA'S DEPLORABLE HUMAN RIGHTS RECORD AND AFGHANISTAN'S ABANDONMENT OF ITS TRADITIONAL POLICY OF GENUINE NONALIGNMENT IN FAVOR OF POLICIES VIRTUALLY INDISTINGUISHABLE FROM THOSE OF MOSCOW AND HAVANA.

(C) MEANWHILE, THE SOVIET PRESENCE IN AFGHANISTAN HAS GROWN IN RECENT MONTHS. AT PRESENT, WE ESTIMATE THERE ARE SOME 3,500 TO 4,000 SOVIET MILITARY PERSONNEL IN AFGHANISTAN

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AS WELL AS SEVERAL THOUSAND CIVILIAN ADVISERS. AS THE INSURGENCY HAS SPREAD, THE SOVIETS HAVE TAKEN A MORE DIRECT ROLE IN COMMAND AND CONTROL FUNCTIONS AND MAY BE PROVIDING SECURITY TO SOME SOVIET PERSONNEL AND INSTALLATIONS. SUBSTANTIAL DELIVERIES OF EQUIPMENT INCLUDING TANKS AND ARMORED PERSONNEL CARRIERS ALSO CONTINUE. YY

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